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"Een voortreffelyke liefhebberye" Het verzamelen van tekeningen door voorname liefhebbers in de republiek en later het koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 1732-1833.

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SUMMARY

Within the art historical discipline, interest for the history of collecting only started in the second half of the nineteenth century. In this new field, drawings received very little attention at first. Frits Lugt's two-volume, Les Marques de Collections de dessins et d'estampes (1921-56), was an exception. This slow start is primarily because the major print rooms only became interested in drawings at a relatively late stage, especially in comparison with prints.

From the mid 1960's, however, one can see a strong growing fascination for the history of collecting drawings in Europe (including the Netherlands) corresponding with the general tide of interest in collecting. The print rooms were instrumental in this development. In general these institutions originated from old, often princely collections, to which, afterwards, large quantities of art on paper were added, sometimes consisting of complete collections. These internal collections are very suitable topics for exhibitions and publications. Unfortunately the reconstruction of such old collections in the Netherlands is much more difficult than abroad, because these collections have not survived. The collections of Pieter Teyler van der Hulst and Frans Boijmans (now in Teylers Museum, Haarlem and Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam), which have only partially endured, are rare exceptions. This is one of the reasons why the (foreign) public has gradually forgotten how important the culture of collecting drawings was in the Dutch Republic and later the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

A comparison of the publications of the last twenty-five years in the field of collecting drawings, in both the Netherlands, and abroad, is striking, as the nature of them is almost always monographic. Coordinating studies that attempt to describe and interpret the topic on a larger scale in a comparative chronological context are non-existent. The present thesis is actually the first of its kind.

Artists, dealers, and amateurs collected drawings on a large scale in the eighteenth-century Dutch Republic. All the important Dutch cities counted dozens of collectors at that time. The plethora of collectors resulted in a lively art trade. Furthermore, the custom of equally dividing the inheritance among the surviving heirs in the Netherlands necessitated that many collections were placed in sales, providing a great stimulus to the trade. In 1725-1800, the Dutch art trade was without equal in Europe. Not surprisingly, it was in the Dutch Republic that the first 'modern' auction catalogue of drawings appeared, for the collection of Lambert ten Kate sold in 1732. A hundred years later, the auctions of two very important collections – those of three generations Goll van Franckenstein and Jacob de Vos – mark the end of the heyday of dealing and collecting master drawings in the Netherlands.

The goal of the present study is to give the reader an idea of the various collectors of drawings in Holland in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century with the 'amateur' (the art devotee or connoisseur) as the most prominent example. To gain insight in the way he builds up his collection, the background, the vicissitude of his collection is the final target. In the amateur's drawing collection one finds a great and meaningful diversity of subjects, techniques, and nationalities. This investigation of the drawing collections of amateurs is not concerned with one particular moment, but surveys the entire period, so that changes in collecting and the prices paid can be compared in the

long term. This naturally raises the question then of what motivated the Dutch drawing collectors in their choices.

This study is based on fifty distinguished amateurs and their auction catalogues. They were selected by the catalogues of the sales of their collections, the only evidence that remains of their often beautiful ensembles. Criteria for the selection were: the year of the auction (the selected auction catalogues are equally divided chronologically throughout the entire period), the size of the collection (more than 500 sheets), place of residence of the collector, and the price-annotations in the studied catalogue. Among the selected collectors are several well-known drawing amateurs, like Lambert ten Kate, Jeronimus Tonneman, Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, and Jacob de Vos, as well as little known collectors such as Hendrik Schut, Seger Tierens, Cornelis van den Berg, and Jan Tak.

The earliest ensembles of drawings are to be found in the medieval workshops, from Italy to England. These collections were comprised of models that were used repeatedly for various purposes by almost everybody in the studio. The character of these collections of models started to change in the early fourteenth century (first in Italy), due to the growing individualization of the artist, the increasing need for practical manual material, the importance of direct study after nature, and the ever-greater availability of paper. The handing down of the collections of models, or the thesaurus of the workshop, was increasingly stressed in legal testaments due to the growing interest in 'copyright'.

In addition to these factors, artists realised better than any one else what rare and beautiful treasures there were among these drawings and many became passionate collectors. Artists with important drawing collections were Giorgio Vasari, Timoteo Viti, Bartolomeo Cavaceppi, Joachim von Sandrart, Lambert Krahe, André-Charles Boulle, Charles Coppel, Gabriel Huquier sr., Peter Lely, Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Lawrence, Lucas de Heere, Joris Hoefnagel, Jan van de Cappelle, Rembrandt, and Peter Paul Rubens.

The result of this interest by artists was of enormous importance, not only because in this way many drawings were preserved, but also because their example inspired many laymen to collect drawings for their artistic value. Time and again in Italy, the German-speaking countries, France, England, as well as in the Netherlands we see how artists set the tone for a type of collecting and how amateurs followed. Often writers about art, art historians *avant la lettre*, applied them selves to building up a drawing collection, frequently chronologically organised. Vasari was probably the shining light for several of these collectors. Well-known examples are: Padre Resta, Filippo Baldinucci, Giovanni Bellori; Roger de Piles, Pierre-Jean Mariette, Antoine Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville, Jonathan Richardson Sr. and Jr., and Constantijn Huygens Jr.

Before laymen started to collect drawings for their artistic merits, they were already seriously interested in drawings, for their scientific and documentary value. Both would remain important long after collecting drawings for their artistic value became fashionable. During the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, several countries witnessed the rise of large *Kunst- und Wunderkammer*; the goal of which was to amass *artificialia* and *naturalia* to acquire a reflection of God's creation and thereby, implicitly show His creative power. The functions of drawings and prints in these collections were usually either more scientific and documentary in nature or more artistic. By the mid-

seventeenth century, and from then on, there were, in almost every European country, collectors who began to concentrate increasingly on art on paper.

Sovereigns only rarely had a real interest in the art of drawing. In general they applied themselves to collecting paintings. Invariably, most of the attention given to forming their paper-art collections was paid to prints. This choice is the result of two important factors. The first is that a well-ordered print collection provided an almost encyclopedic view of the world. The second factor was that with money and continuing care (neither of which was a problem) completeness of the collection could be pursued. Drawings in general do not supply information so easily as prints; they are only rarely signed or dated, and they seldom carry illuminating inscriptions. Furthermore, the outlook and condition of drawings is often not so pristine as prints. More often than not they are, or at least look, unfinished, because of their often preparatory function; occasionally they were found damaged after having been used for decades in an artist's studio. Princes, who showed actual interest in the art of drawing, like Leopoldo de' Medici in Florence, and Albert van Saksen-Teschen in Vienna, were exceptional.

Particular to the Netherlands is that autonomous drawings were highly appreciated, as early as the second half of the sixteenth century. (This predilection for such drawings persisted well into the nineteenth century). The large quantity of autonomous drawings by Dutch seventeenth-century masters makes one believe that they must have been recognised quickly as an important collectors' item – more important than in the countries surrounding the Netherlands. Whether this somewhat divergent way of collecting was the result of the absence of an influential court culture with a grand tradition of collecting paintings or – more practical reason – the relatively scant storage in Holland's small homes remains to be seen.

At the same time, the second half of the seventeenth century, a great interest in classical and Italian art arose in the Dutch Republic. The classical interests were, apart from aesthetic and recreational, motivated by education. Connoisseurs, mainly from Amsterdam and The Hague, were of the opinion that Dutch art was in a deadlock. They hoped that with examples of classical and Italian art, Dutch artists would find the right path again. The first drawing collectors from the present study started their activities in this burgher-, yet internationally oriented society.

The Dutch Republic (and later the Kingdom of the Netherlands) counted well over 450 drawing collectors of certain importance. 400 of them are known by name, mainly through their auction catalogues. These collectors can be subdivided in the following, partly overlapping, categories: artists (100), dealers (20) and amateurs (280).

Just as in the preceding centuries artists formed collections of drawings for the purposes of guarding inspiring and stirring examples for themselves and their pupils. In the eighteenth century, an average artist's collection contained around 500 sheets. Large quantities of their own work (mainly sketches, studies or other preparatory works) and that of their teacher(s) characterized their collections. Artists also dealt in drawings, especially, although not exclusively, with their own work. Furthermore, some of them also collected drawings as a pleasurable pastime. A major difference, however, was that while in the past artists generally handed over their collections to members of their family or to their pupils as a fund of motifs, source of information, and educational equipment,

in the eighteenth century most of the artists' collections were auctioned off after their death, just like the collections of the amateurs.

Dealers acquired drawings both for the trade (to resell them at a profit) and as a recreational pursuit. Compared to the preceding century, the trade in drawings increased considerably in the eighteenth century. Inherent to the occupation, the collections of dealers often had a floating, shifting character. Stock catalogues of drawings were not produced. The main trade in drawings, especially in the eighteenth century, took place at auction. Many of the anonymous drawing auctions (well over one hundred in the period from 1732-1833) were in all likelihood sales of collections composed by dealers, either from collections they had bought in their entirety, or from collections they had on consignment. The result of this large scale approach to selling drawings, was that their auction catalogues were sometimes imprecise.

Eighteenth-century amateurs were motivated to collect drawings by a broad range of ideas. An amusing diversion and aesthetic pleasure were the reasons most often voiced. Other incentives to collecting drawings (and sometimes other media as well) were: the educational and uplifting benefit of art, their value as instructional tools for artists, acquiring knowledge of art, as well as possible financial profit through dealing. According to slanderers there were also collectors motivated by the desire for glory and fame. The religious aspects of collecting, which in the seventeenth century were of some importance in the formations of *Kunst und Wunderkammer*, disappeared, apart from one rare case: the mennonite collector Lambert ten Kate. The general absence of religious motivations to collecting is especially remarkable in the eighteenth century in light of the soaring popularity of the fysico-theology, a movement that tried to reach conclusions about God's omnipotence, mercy, and providence from the study of nature. Meanwhile, the ambition to refine man's intellect and feelings (educational and uplifting benefit of art) is an essential ideal of the Enlightenment.

In general the drawing collections of amateurs were larger than those of artists and dealers. The average number of drawings in a collection being probably between 700 and 1000 sheets. Exceptional were the collections of Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Dirk Versteegh, and Samuel van Huls, the first two counted around 7000 sheets in their collections and the latter, about 15,000. The collections of the amateurs are characterised by a diversity of artists, regarding nationality and time period, and a variety of techniques, including both autonomous drawings and preparatory sketches. Usually an amateur explored many more fields of interest by way of collecting (prints, paintings, books, sculptures, coins and medals), than artists and dealers. An overview of the collections of 'amateurs' reveals that those who collected drawings also appeared to appreciate a well-rounded art collection.

The growth in specialising in collecting particular artistic media, already visible in the second half of the seventeenth century, continued in the eighteenth century. It is striking, for example, how around 1800 a small but growing group of amateurs only collected either drawings or prints. The practice of collecting both art types (for which the Dutch collectors even had one word: *papierkunst*) was over. This was also true of combining collecting *papierkunst* with books. Another remarkable feature of eighteenth century drawing collectors, and different from those of the seventeenth century, was that collections of fossils, shells, and other natural history specimens were rarely combined

with collections of drawings. Instead, collectors seem to have substituted such a cabinet by acquiring ensembles of fauna- and flora drawings.

The drawing collection of the eighteenth century Dutch amateur was mainly organised by subject and technique. A chronological arrangement, already in use for centuries by many collectors in the surrounding countries, was nearly unknown in the Netherlands. One of the rare collectors who embarked on it was Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, probably in imitation of Johann Joachim Winckelmann, the famous antiquarian, and Christian von Mechel, a Swiss art dealer and 'painting curator' for the Habsburg family in Vienna. Unfortunately, Ploos's, untimely death prevented him from completing this task. The chronologically organised drawing collection would only find really acceptance in the Netherlands from the middle of the nineteenth century. The tardy appearance of this method of organising a collection is almost certainly the result of three different factors: unfamiliarity with Vasari's theories and his collection, the predominant interest in a relatively small section of the western European art production: seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch, and the influence of the strictly organised, but rather popular Atlases (collections of maps, often enlarged with various subject sections, such as topography, customs and traditions, costumes, flora etc.).

Probably already from an earlier date, but definitely from the first half of the seventeenth century, drawings were kept in portfolios or albums, called *kunstboeken*. The amateurs generally had large, costly ones, bound in leather with gold imprint. Some collectors started every portfolio with a special title-page, indicating the content. In the seventeenth century the drawings were often pasted down on the sheets of the albums. From the beginning of the eighteenth century, drawings were stored loose between the sheets of the portfolios. For protection, as well as to be able to easily rearrange them in other albums, collectors had their drawings attached to separate mounts probably from 1730 onwards. While in France drawings were pasted down completely on these mounts, in the Dutch Republic they were only hinged along one side. The surrounding borders on these mounts were deliberately simple. For several reasons, such as documentation (including attribution, provenance, and acquisition chronology) and storage indication, a number of collectors provided their drawings with annotations and stamps. The portfolios or albums were kept in specially designed cabinets (*kunstkasten*), the precursor of which was the Atlas cabinet. Eventually, and this was unique in Europe, the Dutch collectors had cabinets for paper art of many different kinds and sizes, the most exclusive of which were painted by well-known artists.

It was not through framed drawings along the wall that a collector would show his collection to friends or acquaintances, but through so-called *kunstbeschouwingen*, gatherings large and small, usually in the evening, where drawings were looked at and passed on around the table.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century 'connoisseurship' (the technique or art of recognising the quality and authorship of works of art) was still a relatively new branch of study. Early Dutch collectors, like Nicolaes Flinck and Lambert ten Kate, were clearly very interested in the new phenomenon and participated in its maturation. Jonathan Richardson Sr. probably had them in mind among others, when he wrote his essay on connoisseurship in 1719. One year earlier his son Jonathan Richardson Jr. had visited both Dutch collectors and had admired their collections. Italian, French, and English collectors considered Flinck as one of the greatest connoisseurs in the field of Italian old master drawings. Printed after his

own manuscript catalogue, the 1732 auction catalogue of Ten Kate's collection was revolutionary in that it was the first sale catalogue in which the drawings were not only described individually, but valuable 'art historical' information was also given. His catalogue was probably the inspiring example for the erudite sale catalogues by the French dealers Edmé François Gersaint and Pierre-Jean Mariette from the 1740's and 1750's. Ten Kate published (together with Antoni Rutgers, who was also an important collector of drawings) Richardson's *Traité de la Peinture ...*, to which he added his essay *Le Beau Idéal* (1728). During the 1740's, however, the Dutch drawing collectors seem to have lost the link to international connoisseurship. This was probably to blame on their increasing predilection for autonomous, often signed Dutch drawings, eliminating hours spent identifying the style of a school or the hand of the artist. At the same time they seem to have secluded themselves from international contacts. The bookseller Pieter Gerard van Balen, for example, was initially very pleased with Gersaint's scholarly auction catalogues, however, after learning of the latter's criticism of the character of the Dutch people, his enthusiasm cooled off considerably.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, Cornelis Ploos van Amstel was one of the very few Dutch collectors who wrote extensively about the arts. His rather subjective attitude, however, and his practice of occasionally deliberately changing attributions in his *rentwerk* (a series of 45 colour facsimiles of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century mainly Dutch drawings, published between 1765 and 1787) make it difficult to evaluate his position as a connoisseur. Already in 1821 Christiaan Josi had corrected several of Ploos' erroneous attributions in the *Collection d'imitations ...* (the luxurious publication of Ploos' 45 facsimiles, amplified with 55 new ones). Possibly his extended stay in England helped Josi develop into an internationally acclaimed connoisseur: the right man to write the texts in the *Collection d'imitations ...* (1821). From these texts and from his other 'art historical' activities, Josi emerges as an independent and critical mind, definitely one of the most important writing connoisseurs in Holland around 1800. However, one has to bear in mind that many more connoisseurs of Dutch drawings existed in Holland at that time. This is obvious from private inventories, auction catalogues, and what we know about the *kunstbeschouwingen* (art viewings), as well as, of course, most importantly, from their phenomenal drawing collections. These connoisseurs have remained historically, however, as they did not leave behind any written contributions to the field.

Of the fifty drawing collectors studied in the present thesis, fourteen handled the drawing pen themselves. In the eighteenth century, drawing was a well-established pastime at the higher echelons of society in almost every European country. The origin for the popularity of amateur-drawing is to be found in Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (1528), where is stated that the courtier has to command the art of drawing and has to have some knowledge of the art of painting. As a result, drawing appeared in the education program of a young prince. Very soon the aristocracy and the upper middle classes adopted this. Initially, the primary reason for learning to draw was practical (to sketch a plan of an attack, to portray a friend, to design a garden etc.), however, from 1699 – when De Piles put it in so many words – one realised that it also sharpened one's capacity to judge art. The result of the importance placed on drawing was a high concentration of amateur draftsmen among collectors and connoisseurs. Of these many also participated in the (re) establishing of drawing academies. These institutions also served a chauvinistic and economic goal, as it was hoped on the one hand that with a better drawing education the Dutch artists might

relocate the path of their illustrious predecessors, and on the other that the general level of craftsmanship would be raised. The result of the participation of the amateurs was that they often sat next to (beginning) artists at the drawing sessions, which could be lucrative for both. Eventually, however, a less positive effect of this practice was the increasing influence of the amateurs on the vicissitudes of the academies. This became a larger problem during the course of the eighteenth century, as the activity of drawing by amateurs came to be appreciated for its ability to civilize morals and cultivate general virtues and the level of skill demonstrated was deemed unimportant. In 1817, with the establishment of the Royal Academy of Visual Arts in Amsterdam, combined training in drawing for artists, artisans, and amateurs disappeared, ending a notable time when artists and amateurs worked both for and often next to, one another.

Dutch art was the main focal point for eighteenth-century drawing collectors in Holland despite the countless possibilities Dutch collectors had to acquire foreign art. Foreign art was only collected on a large scale by a few people. Italian art was the most popular and was followed at a distance by French, German, English, and other schools. Initially, Italian art enjoyed the greatest general interest, as is demonstrated in early drawing collections from around 1740 and earlier. However, its popularity did not last and after 1750 important collectors of Italian art were extremely rare.

The Dutch collectors almost completely ignored Italian art of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Leonardo da Vinci was the only artist truly esteemed from that period. The main interest of the Dutchmen, however, was directed towards the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries. The draftsmen most favored were Raphael and his followers (Giovanni Francesco Penni, Giulio Romano, and Parmigianino), followed by artists like Guido Reni, Pietro Testa, and Pietro da Cortona. Apart from the work of Rosalba Carriera and Andrea Locatelli, the eighteenth century appears to have been barely appreciated.

The choice of collectors in this epoch was largely determined by the classical art theory, dominant throughout Europe from the middle of the seventeenth century. The classicists saw their ideal embodied in classical sculpture and Italian art from the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. People from the circle of Jan de Bisschop (the most important propagator of the classicist style in the Republic), Constantijn Huygens Jr., Jan Six, and Jan van der Does, did indeed build up major collections of Italian drawings. The earliest collectors studied in the present thesis, Lambert ten Kate, Samuel van Huls, Valerius Röver, and Gosuinus Uilenbroek, all had large collections of Italian drawings as well and they were all well acquainted with the classicist range of thought.

During the eighteenth century the influence of classicist art theory declined in the Republic and with it the interest in Italian art. Meanwhile the popularity of Dutch art soared. It should be noted, however, that the interest in Dutch art had never really disappeared in Holland, not even during the heyday of classicism. Röver and Van Huls had ultimately more Dutch than Italian drawings and De Bisschop published his Icones and Paradigmata, precisely because he thought Dutch artists should pay more attention to the classical ideal of beauty. Furthermore, there were occasionally some collectors who had an eye for fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italian drawings, indicating – although their interest was mainly ‘art historical’ – that different art was also looked upon with some respect. Nevertheless, most of eighteenth-century Dutch collectors still kept a small

group of Italian drawings, varying from ten to a hundred pieces, depending mostly on the size of the rest of their collection. The reasons behind this were probably that the classicist art theory was still dominant and the general 'art historical' notion that Italy was the cradle of 'true art'.

French drawings were only collected on a limited scale. Among the fifty collectors studied in this thesis, thirteen had more than forty French drawings. This, despite the 1761 sale in Amsterdam of the collection of Gabriel Huquier Sr. that brought some 1400 French drawings to the Republic, enabling Dutch collectors to acquire French drawings first hand. The collectors rarely owned works by artists earlier than Simon Vouet. Their main interest was for seventeenth-century masters like François Boitart, Georges François Blondel, Charles Le Brun, Raymond Lafage, Eustache Le Sueur, and Nicolas Poussin. From the French eighteenth century, represented rather haphazardly, the collectors took an interest in the work of François Boucher (quantitatively) and Jean-Baptiste Oudry (financially).

Again, classicist ideas must have been largely at the origin of this rather limited choice of French draftsmen. Therefore, what has been argued about the popularity of collecting Italian drawings can be applied equally to French drawings as well; that as the influence of classicism waned, the interest in French drawings ebbed away. It is important to realise as well that in comparison to Italian drawings, the collecting of French drawings in the Republic began years later, and therefore never attained a high level of significance. Contemporary French art was perhaps briefly appreciated after 1761. However, the increasing interest in Dutch art and the renewed respect for classical art, in the form of neo-classicism, left no place for the *gemanierdheid* (mannerism) of Watteau and Boucher. Sometimes French art as a whole was criticised for its artificiality. After the French rule (1795-1813) the general mood became very anti-French. Praised in 1809 as the rescuers of European painting, Jacques-Louis David and Pierre-Narcisse Guérin were dismissed as *zielloos* (soulless).

German drawings did not enjoy great enthusiasm among the Dutch eighteenth-century collectors. Among the fifty collectors only seven had more than forty German drawings. Of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century masters Dürer was the most sought after and consequently the best represented. The work of the remaining fifteenth- and sixteenth-century German draftsmen was present only haphazardly. This also applies to the seventeenth century; the Dutch collectors seem only to have known Hans Rottenhammer, Johann Heinrich Roos, and Adam Elsheimer. From the German eighteenth century, they appreciated mainly Christian Wilhelm Ernst Dietrich, Johann Elias Ridinger, and members of the Dietzsch family (Johann Christoph and Margaretha Barbara). Dürer was considered 'gothic' and for that reason, following the classicist aesthetic, his work was rejected. Apart from one or two exceptions, connoisseurs and collectors criticised his lack of knowledge of antiquity and his slavish copying of nature. His work (and that of his contemporaries) was probably collected out of 'art historical' interest. The 'primitiveness' of the fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century masters more or less stigmatised the whole of German art for eighteenth-century amateurs. As late as 1787 the connoisseur Roeland van Eynden wrote that German art had only in the last few years liberated itself completely from 'the gothic'. The reason that Dietrich, Dietzsch, and Ridinger were valued highly in the Republic was probably their finished technique and their thematic kinship with Dutch art.

The Dutch eighteenth-century collectors of drawings were mainly interested in their 'own art', however, not of all periods. Only a few of them like Samuel van Huls, Johan van der Marck, Cornelis van den Berg, Johannes Enschedé, and Cornelis Ploos van Amstel collected fourteenth- and fifteenth-century drawings. The drawings they collected did own from this period, carry – not always correctly – the names of well-known artists such as Jan and Hubert van Eyck, Cornelis Engebrechts, and Geertgen tot St. Jan. The early sixteenth century was also undervalued. Lucas van Leyden was the only artist who attracted some attention. Drawings from the late sixteenth century, however, by Hendrick Goltzius, Abraham Bloemaert, and Jacques de Gheyn II must have enjoyed considerable success, because the eighteenth-century amateurs collected their work on a grand scale.

Evidently, Dutch drawings from the seventeenth century were the most popular among eighteenth-century collectors. They collected broadly: history-, genre-scenes, landscapes, marines, portraits, and representations of flowers and animals. Landscapes were the most popular; many collectors were able to bring together beautiful groups of works by Jacob Ruisdael, Adriaen van de Velde, and Nicolaes Berchem among others. Where genre-artists are concerned, Adriaen van Ostade was highly in demand. Almost fifty collectors had drawings by Rembrandt. However, it appears they were not really familiar with his drawing style. All kinds of Rembrandtesque drawings were attributed to him. Eventually these drawings turn out more often than not to be works by his pupils.

Among the fifty studied collectors, interest in contemporary drawings seems to have rarely equalled that of drawings from the preceding century. Only five collectors had more eighteenth-century than seventeenth-century sheets. Again the collectors made sure they brought together a broad representation of all the genres, and again landscapes were the most popular. Characteristic for collecting contemporary art is that some eighteenth-century collectors had dozens of works by a certain artist, while other contemporary collectors had hardly anything by the same draftsman. Sometimes this is the result of the personal predilection of the collector, sometimes a rather practical explanation is at hand, such as an artist and collector who were from the same city.

With regard to the appreciation of early Netherlandish art one can repeat the critical remarks made towards early German art, on the understanding that interest increased when the drawing showed a historic person or situation, either regionally, nationally, or 'art historically'. In addition to his 'art historical' attraction (the beginning of Dutch art), Lucas van Leyden seems to have been the first artist for whom amateurs had a genuine artistic love. Although some Dutch connoisseurs had a more thoughtful approach towards Dutch mannerism than connoisseurs abroad, the collectors did not esteem this art form, especially in its extreme expressions. This influenced the prices paid for mannerists' works. Drawings by Abraham Bloemaert, Jacques de Gheyn II, and Hendrick Goltzius rarely fetched high prices. The declining interest in classicism and the increasing appreciation for 'characteristic' Dutch seventeenth-century art were probably also determining factors in the relatively limited interest in late sixteenth-century art.

What is clear after examining the prices that were paid for drawings is that Dutch eighteenth-century amateurs had the greatest affinity for Dutch art of the seventeenth century. Drawings by Nicolaes Berchem, Adriaen van Ostade, and Adriaen van de Velde – at least the highly finished sheets – were the most sought after during the entire period. Of utmost importance in appreciating Dutch drawings were: the technique; the ingenious true-to-nature representations; and the 'beatus ille'-aspect (with recognisable) staffage.

Another reason for their popularity – although the collectors were in all likelihood not always aware of this – was that they were made in the seventeenth-century, the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic. After the middle of the eighteenth century, one senses a feeling of inferiority towards the art of this period. In addition, collectors and connoisseurs alike also felt the same inferiority towards the arts from abroad. Probably theorists and collectors considered the ‘perfect’ drawings (as well as, of course, the paintings) by Berchem, Van Ostade, and Van de Velde as a sort of Dutch response to the ‘international’, history representation, the highest attainable goal within the system, ruled by the classical art theory.

For, while eighteenth-century Dutch collectors were primarily attracted to seventeenth-century Dutch landscapes and genre representations, connoisseurs abroad (as well as several Dutch drawing academies) continued to propagate the classicist art theory. These groups criticised Dutch art for its supposedly, low and realistic subjects. As is hardly surprising, these taunts provoked reactions. From the surrounding countries – where incidentally Dutch seventeenth-century art was also very popular – came not only critical voices, but also supporting opinions, for example from the theorists, Jean-Baptiste Dubos and Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, making it clear that the classicist norm was no longer sacred. Probably supported by these foreign publications, several Dutch authors, like Cornelis Ploos van Amstel, Jacob Otten Husly, and François Hemsterhuis, tried to bridge the discrepancy between ‘Dutch’ and ‘academic’ art theory while refuting the criticism of Dutch art. The rising patriotism was also an important motive for these authors. Ploos van Amstel’s theory that the subject of a work of art is relatively unimportant as long as it contains *poëzy* (poetry, meaning idealised beauty and imagination), which had to be derived from classical art – is the most elaborate. Ploos was a true advocate of Dutch art and its iconography. He was able to interweave both schools of thought, as well as publish facsimiles of Dutch drawings with accompanying texts. Eventually, however, in their urge to stand firm for the often criticised Dutch art, Ploos, Otten Husly, and others ignored the work of the occasionally un-Dutch seventeenth-century history painters and draftsmen, resulting in the persistent image of Dutch art, as comprising only landscapes, genre scenes, still lifes, and portraits.

Patriotism, the related nostalgic admiration for the art of the Golden Age, and a renewed interest in classical antiquity had various immediate effects on Dutch eighteenth-century art and its appeal. The repercussions of which can be seen in the collections and in prices paid for drawings. Appreciation for certain artists and their work (sometimes only part of their oeuvre) declined at the end of the eighteenth century. For example the esteem receded for the oeuvre of the rococo artist Jacob de Wit, the classical, idealised landscapes by Jan van Huysum and Isaac de Moucheron and the work of Italianate artists like Hendrik Voogd and Josephus Augustus Knip. Generally speaking, their paintings and drawings were considered to be ‘un-Dutch’ and for that reason inferior to the ‘characteristic’ Dutch landscapes or genre scenes by Jacob Cats, Jan Hulswit, Wouter van Troostwijk, and Pieter Gerardus van Os. A rare example of an important eighteenth-century artist who was esteemed highly during the entire period was Cornelis Troost. His constant popularity was due to his true-to-nature style, his working around rococo-mannerisms, and his themes, which were close to Dutch seventeenth-century art.